

COUNTRY PROFILE: SINGAPORE

May 2005

COUNTRY

Formal Name: Republic of Singapore (English-language name). Also, in other official languages: Republik Singapura (Malay), Xinjiapo Gongheguo (Chinese) 新加坡共和国, and Cingkappūr Kudiyarasu (Tamil) சிங்கப்பூர் குடியரசு.

Short Form: Singapore.

Term for Citizen(s): Singaporeans.

Capital: Singapore.

Major Cities: Singapore is a city-state. The city of Singapore is located on the south-central coast of the island of Singapore, but urbanization has taken over most of the territory of the island.

Date of Independence: August 31, 1963, from Britain; August 9, 1965, from the Federation of Malaysia.

National Public Holidays: New Year's Day (January 1); Lunar New Year (movable date in January or February); Hari Raya Haji (Feast of the Sacrifice, movable date in February); Good Friday (movable date in March or April); Labour Day (May 1); Vesak Day (June 2); National Day or Independence Day (August 9); Deepavali (movable date in November); Hari Raya Puasa (end of Ramadan, movable date according to the Islamic lunar calendar); and Christmas (December 25).

Flag:

Two equal horizontal bands of red (top) and white; a vertical white crescent (closed portion toward the hoist side), partially enclosing five white-point stars arranged in a circle, is positioned near the hoist side of the red band. The red band symbolizes universal brotherhood and equality of men; the white band, purity and virtue. The crescent moon represents a young nation on the rise, while the five stars stand for the ideals of democracy, peace, progress, justice, and equality.



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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Early History: The island of Singapore was known to mariners at least by the third century A.D. By the seventh century, when a succession of maritime states arose throughout the Malay

Archipelago, Singapore probably was one of the many trading outposts serving as an entrepôt and supply point for Malay, Thai, Javanese, Chinese, Indian, and Arab traders. A fourteenth-century Javanese chronicle referred to the island as Temasek, and a seventeenth-century Malay annal noted the 1299 founding of the city of Singapura (“lion city”) after a strange, lion-like beast that had been sighted there. Singapura was controlled by a succession of regional empires and Malayan sultanates.

European Arrivals: Portuguese explorers captured the port of Melaka (Malacca) in 1511, forcing the reigning sultan to flee south, where he established a new regime, the Johore Sultanate, that incorporated Singapura. The Portuguese burned down a trading post at the mouth of the Temasek (Singapore) River in 1613; the island was largely abandoned after that, and trading and planting activities moved to the south, in the Riau Islands and Sumatra. However, planting activities had returned to Temasek by the early nineteenth century. In 1818 Temasek was settled by a Malay official of the Johore Sultanate and his followers, who shared the island with several hundred indigenous tribal people and Chinese planters. The year 1819 marked the arrival of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, the lieutenant governor of the British enclave of Bencoolen (Bengkulu on the west coast of Sumatra) and an agent of the British East India Company, who obtained permission from the local Malay official to establish a trading post. He called it Singapore, after its ancient name, and opened the port to free trade and free immigration on the south coast of the island, at the mouth of the Singapore River. At the time, Singapore had about 1,000 inhabitants. By 1827 Chinese had become the most numerous of Singapore’s various ethnic groups. They came from Malacca, Penang, Riau, and other parts of the Malay Archipelago. More recent Chinese migrants came from the South China provinces of Guangdong and Fujian.

British Colonial Period: During the 50 years following Raffles’s establishment of his free-trade port, Singapore grew in size, population, and prosperity. In 1824 the Dutch formally recognized British control of Singapore, and London acquired full sovereignty over the island. From 1826 to 1867, Singapore, along with two other trading ports on the Malay Peninsula—Penang and Malacca—and several smaller dependencies, were ruled together as the Straits Settlements from the British East India Company headquarters in India. In 1867 the British needed a better location than fever-ridden Hong Kong to station their troops in Asia, and the Straits Settlements were made a crown colony, with its capital in Penang, ruled directly from London. The British installed a governor and executive and legislative councils. By that time, Singapore had surpassed the other Straits Settlements in importance, as it had grown to become a bustling seaport with 86,000 inhabitants. Singapore also dominated the Straits Settlements Legislative Council. After the Suez Canal opened in 1869 and steamships became the major form of ocean transport, British influence increased in the region, bringing still greater maritime activity to Singapore. Later in the century and into the twentieth century, Singapore became a major point of disembarkation for hundreds of thousands of laborers imported from China, India, the Dutch East Indies, and the Malay Archipelago, bound for tin mines and rubber plantations to the north.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Singapore prospered, as financial institutions, transportation, communications, and government infrastructure expanded rapidly to support the booming trade and industry of the British Empire. Although Singapore was largely unaffected by World War I (1914–18), it experienced the same postwar boom and depression as the rest of the

world. Along with the influx of Chinese migrants over the previous decades came secret societies and kinship and place-name associations that grew to have great influence on society. Political activities surfaced in Singapore among the large Chinese population, first in the early 1900s between advocates of reform and revolution in China. Then, in the 1930s, there was increased interest in developments in China, and many supported either the Chinese Communist Party or the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang). The Malayan Communist Party (MCP) was established in 1930 and competed with local branches of the Guomindang. Both sides strongly supported China against the rising tide of Japanese aggression. Some years earlier, in 1923, in reaction to Japan's increasing naval power, the British began building a large naval base at Singapore. It was costly and unpopular, but when completed in 1941, this "Gibraltar of the East" was an attractive target for Japan.

Japan attacked Malaya in December 1941, and by February 1942 the Japanese had taken control of both Malaya and Singapore. They renamed Singapore Shōnan ("Light of the South") and set about dismantling the British establishment. Singapore suffered greatly during the war, first from the Japanese attack and then from Allied bombings of its harbor facilities. By the war's end, the colony was in poor shape, with a high death rate, rampant crime and corruption, and severe infrastructure damage. During the 1942–45 occupation period, the view of the colonial relationship had changed among the local population, as it had in other British colonies, and upon the return of the British, there were demands for self-rule. In 1946 Singapore became a separate crown colony with a civil administration. When the Federation of Malaya was established in 1948 as a move toward self-rule, Singapore continued as a separate crown colony. The same year, the MCP launched an insurrection in Malaya and Singapore, and the British declared a State of Emergency that was to continue until 1960. The worldwide demand for tin and rubber brought economic recovery to Singapore by this time, and the Korean War (1950–53) brought further economic boom to the colony. However, strikes and students demonstrations organized by the MCP throughout the 1950s continued to arouse fears in Malaya of a communist takeover.

In 1953 a British commission recommended partial internal self-government for Singapore. In this milieu, other political parties began to form in 1954. One was the Labour Front led by David Marshall, who called for immediate independence and merger with Malaya. The same year, the People's Action Party (PAP) was established under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, a Cambridge-educated lawyer. The PAP also campaigned for an end to colonialism and a merger with Malaya. Following Legislative Assembly elections in 1955, a coalition government was formed with Marshall as chief minister. As a result of further talks with London, Singapore was granted internal self-government while the British continued to control defense and foreign affairs. In 1957 Malaya was granted independence, and the next year the British Parliament changed the status of Singapore from colony to state and provided for new elections.

The PAP swept the elections held in May 1959, and Lee Kuan Yew became the first prime minister. The PAP's strongest opponents were communists operating in both legal and illegal organizations. The most prominent was the Barisan Sosialis (Socialist Front), a left-wing party that retained prominence in the 1960s and early 1970s. There also were fears that communists within the PAP would seize control of the government, but moderates led by Lee held sway. In 1962 Singaporean voters approved the PAP's merger plan with Malaya, and on September 16,

1963, Singapore joined Malaya and the former British territories on the island of Borneo—Sabah and Sarawak—to form an independent Federation of Malaysia. Brunei opted out of the federation.

Singapore as Part of Malaysia: Between 1963 and 1965, Singapore was an integral part of the Federation of Malaysia. Union with Malaya had always been a goal of Lee Kuan Yew and the moderate wing of the PAP. Once the PAP ranks were firmly under Lee's control, he met with the leaders of Malaya, Sabah, and Sarawak to sign the Malaysia Agreement on July 9, 1963, under which the independent nation of Malaysia was to come into being. Lee declared Singapore's independence from Britain on August 31, 1963, dissolved the Legislative Assembly, and called for an election to obtain a new mandate for the PAP pro-merger government. Many political opponents of the merger were jailed, and the PAP won a majority of seats in the assembly. Despite threats of military confrontation (Konfrontasi) from Indonesia and actual raids on Sabah and Sarawak by Indonesian commandos, the merger took place on September 16, 1963. The new federation was based on an uneasy alliance between Malays and ethnic Chinese. Communal rioting ensued in various parts of the new nation, including usually well-controlled Singapore. In the end, the merger did not work. As a state, Singapore did not achieve the progress it had hoped for in the financial arena, and political tensions escalated between Chinese-dominated Singapore and Malay-dominated Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. Fearing greater Singaporean dominance of the federation and more violence between the Muslim and Chinese communities, the government of Malaysia decided to separate Singapore from the fledgling federation.

Independent Singapore: After separation from Malaysia on August 9, 1965, Singapore was forced to accept the challenge of forging a viable nation—the Republic of Singapore—on a small island with few resources beyond the determination and talent of its people. Under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew and the PAP, the new nation rose to the occasion. Konfrontasi with Indonesia came to an end in 1966. Trade with Japan and the United States increased substantially, especially with the latter, as Singapore became a supply center for the increasing U.S. involvement in the Second Indochina War (1954–75). In 1967 Singapore joined Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand in forming the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for the purpose of promoting regional stability, economic development, and cultural exchange. In 1968 Britain announced its decision to withdraw from its military bases in Singapore within three years. Because of the defense implications and the amount of British spending (it accounted for about 25 percent of the gross national product [GNP] of Singapore), this was sobering news. The government called for new elections and sought a new mandate to proceed. With the PAP winning all 58 parliamentary seats, the government passed stricter labor legislation, thus helping overcome the nation's reputation for frequent labor disputes and strikes. Former British naval base workers were retrained to work in what became the Sembawang Shipyard, which became a major shipbuilding and ship repair center. By the 1970s, Singapore had become a world leader in shipping, air transport, and oil refining. No longer was Singapore as dependent on peninsular Malaysia for its economic prosperity.

Economic Success: In the 1970s through the 1990s, Singapore experienced sustained economic growth. Along with Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan, it became one of the "Four Tigers" of Asian economic prosperity. Labor-intensive industries were relocated to other ASEAN nations and were replaced by high-technology industries and services. The PAP developed a stable and

corruption-free government, with strong central development planning and social policies. Despite paternalistic, sometimes authoritarian governmental practices and one-party dominance, the PAP maintained a large popular mandate. A Singaporean identity, distinct from that of the Malay and Chinese worlds, emerged as the nation increasingly became integrated with the global economy. In 1990 Lee Kuan Yew stepped down as prime minister, and Goh Chok Tong, the first deputy prime minister and first minister of defense, took over as part of the succession to a new generation of leaders. The Asian economic crisis of 1997–98 was not a major setback for Singapore as it was for other Southeast Asian nations. The regional economic downturn brought fluctuating growth rates to Singapore but no serious problems. Except for oil-rich Brunei, Singapore remained the most prosperous nation in the region. After 14 years in office, in 2004 Goh stepped down in favor of Lee Hsien Loong, the minister of finance and son of Lee Kuan Yew. The elder Lee stayed on as minister mentor and Goh as senior minister to see through the transition of the new generation of leaders.

GEOGRAPHY

Location: Singapore is located in Southeast Asia between Malaysia and Indonesia, at the narrowest point of the Strait of Malacca, one of the world's strategic sea routes connecting the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea. Lying off the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, Singapore is connected to Malaysia by a causeway.



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Size: The land area claimed by the government in 2004 was 699 square kilometers; the water area was 10 square kilometers, for a total national area of 709 square kilometers. The area has increased through land reclamation and landfill projects along the coast. Since 1988, the total land area has increased by some 63 square kilometers.

Land Boundaries: Singapore is an island nation with no land boundaries. Malaysia lies north across the Johore Strait and Indonesia to the south across the Strait of Malacca.

Length of Coastline: Singapore comprises one main island and 58 islets. The total coastline in 2005 was 193 kilometers. Since 1988, the coastline has increased by 55 kilometers as a result of extensive land reclamation and landfill projects.

Maritime Claims: Singapore claims a 3-nautical-mile territorial sea, as well as an exclusive fishing zone beyond the territorial sea as defined in treaties and practice.

Topography: Singapore is mainly low-lying, with rounded granite hills, especially in the island's center. At 166 meters above sea level, the highest point is Bukit Timah Peak. Low but steep ridges are found in the west and southwest. To the east is a large region of generally flat alluvial soils, where streams have cut steep-sided valleys and gullies. Singapore was once covered with tropical rain forest and surrounded by mangrove swamps. As the island urbanized, hills were leveled and swamps drained. By 2005 forest covered only about 4,000 hectares, or 6.6 percent of the land area. The gently undulating central plateau contains a water catchment area and a nature preserve.

Principal Rivers: The Singapore River is only 4.1 kilometers in length but was an important resource historically for early settlers and traders. The Singapore River has five tributaries: the Rochor, Whampoa, Kallang, Pelton, and Geylang rivers. There are other small streams, some of which flow directly into the sea through mangrove swamps, lagoons, or broad estuaries. Some of the large streams have been dammed at their mouths to form freshwater reservoirs. Singapore has 10 major reservoirs, both coastal and inland.

Climate: Only two degrees north of the equator, Singapore has a tropical climate, with high temperatures moderated by sea breezes and high humidity. There are two monsoon seasons, the northeastern (dry) monsoon from December to March and the southwestern (wet) monsoon from June to September. In the inter-monsoon seasons, afternoon and early evening thunderstorms are frequent in occurrence.

Natural Resources: Fish and deepwater ports.

Land Use: Only 1.6 percent of the land is arable. In 1967, 25 percent of the land was in agricultural use, but by 1988, despite increases through land reclamation, that percentage had decreased to 8.5 percent and is predicted to shrink to 3.2 percent by 2030. Singapore has no irrigated land, and none of the land is planted to permanent crops. More than 60 percent of the land is devoted to residential, industrial, commercial, institutional, and infrastructure spaces.

Environmental Factors: The major environmental issues are industrial pollution, limited freshwater resources, waste disposal, and seasonal smoke and haze resulting from forest fires in Indonesia.

Time Zone: Singapore is in one time zone, 8 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

SOCIETY

Population: Singapore's population was reported by the government at 4,240,300 in July 2004, an increase of some 222,560 since the 2000 census. Of this total, 3,486,900 were citizens or permanent residents. In 2004 the annual population growth rate, based on total residents, was 1.3 percent, and population density was estimated at 6,066 persons per square kilometer.

Demography: According to estimates of Singapore's age structure, 16 percent are 0–14 years of age, 75.9 percent are 15–64 years of age, and 8.1 percent are 65 and older. Estimates made in 2005 indicate a birthrate of nearly 9.5 births per 1,000 population and a death rate of almost 4.1 deaths per 1,000. In 2005 life expectancy at birth was estimated at nearly 84.4 years for women and 79.0 for men, or 81.6 years total. The infant mortality rate was estimated at 2.3 per 1,000 live births, and the total fertility rate for 2005 was estimated at about 1.05 children per woman. The gender ratio at birth was 1.08 males to 1 female.

Ethnic Groups: According to the 2000 census, ethnic Chinese make up 76.8 percent of the population. The largest group are descendants of Hokkien-speaking migrants from southern Fujian Province in China. The second largest group are descendants of Teochiu-speakers from

northeastern Guangdong Province. The third largest group are those whose Yue-dialect ancestors came from the Guangzhou area of Guangdong. Hakka (guest family) from upland areas of both Guangdong and Fujian and other groups from coastal areas of Fujian make up the remainder of the Chinese population. The rest of Singapore's population are Malay (13.9 percent), Indian (mostly Tamils, 7.9 percent), and other (1.4 percent).

Languages: Singaporeans speak many different languages, and the majority speak at least two languages. Malay is the national language. It also is one of the four official languages, along with Chinese, Tamil, and English. Chinese is the majority language, representing about 76 percent of the population. The major Chinese dialect is Minnan, followed by Yue (Cantonese), Mandarin, Hakka, Mindong, Puxian, and Minbei. Although the post-independence generation and most Chinese migrants to Singapore over the centuries spoke southern Chinese dialects, since 1979 the government has promoted the use of Mandarin Chinese. Other languages, in order of use, are Malay (about 15 percent), English (about 9 percent), and Tamil (about 4 percent). Lesser-spoken languages, in order of use, include Malayalam, Baba Malay (a Malay-Chinese creole), Punjabi, Madurese, Sinhala, Gujarati, and Javanese.

Religion: According to the 2000 census, 2.9 million Singaporeans professed adherence to a religious faith. Of these, Buddhists and Daoists made up 51.0 percent of the total, or 64.4 percent of the Chinese population and 13.9 percent of the "other" ethnic composition. Islam had the second largest following at 14.9 percent, or 99.6 percent of the Malay population. Christians represented 14.6 percent of religious believers and 53.3 percent of the "other" ethnic category. Hindus made up 4.0 percent of believers, or about 55.5 percent of the Indian population. Other religions made up only 0.4 percent of the total, and 14.8 percent professed no religious affiliation.

Education and Literacy: The British-inspired education system includes six years of compulsory primary school, four years of secondary school, and two years of junior college for those aspiring to higher education. All children between age 6 and 14 are required to attend school, and school attendance in 2005 was almost universal for both the primary and secondary levels. English is the primary medium of instruction. In 2003 Singapore had 175 primary schools with 299,993 students and 12,025 teachers and 162 secondary schools with 206,426 students and 10,830 teachers. At the postsecondary level, there were two centralized institutes with 851 students and 103 teachers and 16 junior colleges with 23,708 students and 1,956 faculty members. Postsecondary education also includes Singapore Polytechnic, which in 2003 had 55,737 students. Higher education includes the Institute of Technical Education, with 17,941 students, and the National Institute of Education with 2,953 students. Singapore has two public universities: the National University of Singapore, founded in 1905, with 31,346 undergraduate and graduate students in academic year 2004–5; and Nanyang Technical University, founded in 1955, with 23,891 undergraduate and graduate students in academic year 2004–5. A third, government-funded, privately managed institution, the Singapore Management University, was established in 2000 and had 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students in 2004–5. Together, these three universities have 40,095 students. Public expenditures on education totaled 3.8 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) for school year 2003–4. Literacy is estimated at 94.6 percent overall, and 57.8 percent of Singaporeans have secondary school or higher qualifications.

Health: The state of health in Singapore is good by international standards. According to the Ministry of Health, rising standards of living, high standards of education, good housing, safe water supply and sanitation, a high level of medical services, and the active promotion of preventive medicine all have helped to significantly boost the health of Singaporeans. The leading causes of death in Singapore are cancer, heart disease, pneumonia, and cerebrovascular diseases. Two health care delivery “cluster” systems are available to Singaporeans. The eastern cluster is the National Healthcare Group, which provides comprehensive public health care through a network of four hospitals, one national center, nine polyclinics, and three specialty institutes. The eastern cluster is Singapore Health Services, which has three hospitals, five national specialist centers, and a network of primary health care clinics. Medical insurance is available via Medisave for hospitalization and some outpatient services, Medifund for those unable to pay for their medical expenses, Medishield for catastrophic illness, and Eldershield for senior citizens with severe disabilities. In 2003 Singapore had 29 hospitals with 11,855 hospital beds, as well as 6,292 physicians (1.5 physicians per 1,000 population or 1 physician for every 670 persons) and 18,763 nurses and midwives (4.5 nurses per 1,000 population or 1 nurse for every 200 persons). Traditional Chinese medicine also is widely practiced. In 2004, 9.4 percent of total government expenditures went for health care. At the end of 2004, the Ministry of Health reported that 2,386 Singaporeans were infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV); of these, 593 had developed full-blown acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

Welfare: The Central Provident Fund is Singapore’s compulsory national social security savings plan. It was established in 1955 to ensure the financial security of all workers either retired or no longer able to work. Citizens and permanent residents are eligible to participate. Since the early 1990s, contributions of 40 percent of the gross wages of employees under 55 have been mandated, with employee and employer sharing the burden equally. Singaporeans can use these funds to invest in approved securities, to purchase homes in government housing projects, or to pay for hospitalization and retirement. The government makes major expenditures—45 percent of total government spending in 2004—for “social development.” Some 93 percent of Singapore residents (citizens and permanent residents) own their own homes. Of these, 72.3 percent live in high-density buildings in four-room or larger apartments or in private housing.

ECONOMY

Overview: Singapore has a highly developed and successful free-trade economy. Maintaining a free and open multilateral trading system is essential for Singapore’s national well-being, and Singapore trades with any other state when it is to their mutual benefit and helps maintain an open-market economy. Singapore enjoys an open and corruption-free environment with stable prices and a high per capita gross domestic product (GDP). The economy depends heavily on the export trade, particularly in the electronics and manufacturing sectors. Because of solid economic policies and practices, Singapore was less affected by the 1997–98 economic crisis than other Southeast Asian nations. In 1998 Singapore’s GDP was minus 0.8 percent but bounced back to 6.8 percent in 1999 and 9.6 percent in 2000. It then achieved minus 2.0 growth in 2001 and continued to fluctuate (with positive balances) in the following years.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/Gross National Income (GNI): Singapore's GDP for 2004 was about US\$110.3 billion, an 8.4 percent increase over 2003. The estimated per capita GDP in 2004 was US\$25,191 up from US\$460 in 1960 and US\$4,854 in 1980. GNI per capita for 2004 was US\$24,560, up from US\$434 in 1960 and US\$4,657 in 1980.

Government Budget: As reported by the Ministry of Finance for fiscal year (FY) 2004, Singapore's revenues were US\$16.9 billion, and expenditures were US\$17.8 billion. In FY 2005, operating revenue was projected at US\$17.7 billion and expenditures at US\$18.1 billion.

Inflation: The inflation rate in Singapore was 0.5 percent according to 2003 estimates.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing: As an economic category, agriculture, forestry, and fishing are not large enough to be reported as a part of the gross domestic product (GDP) but are instead subsumed under industrial production. In 1960 Singapore had 20,000 small farms on 14,000 hectares of land. By 1995 farmland had been severely reduced and was, by then, concentrated on 1,500 hectares of agrotechnology parks housing modern intensive farms. In 2000 the government established the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore to oversee the agrotechnology parks (including the current 67 vegetable farms and 5 egg-laying farms), the development of agrotechnology and agribiotechnology (knowledge of agriculture and molecular biology applied to large-scale, intensive farming), and the promotion of investments in the agri-industry. Singapore's agricultural products include, in order of precedence, rubber, copra, fruit, orchids (15 percent of the world market), vegetables, poultry, eggs, and ornamental fish (30 percent of the world market). In 2003 Singapore produced about US\$108 million in agricultural products (including livestock and fishing) for both domestic consumption and export. Since the 1980s, the government has made a concerted effort to conserve the surviving forest areas of Singapore. The last reported harvests were in 1992, when 25,000 cubic meters of sawnwood were produced. Around this time, only some 100 hectares of forest and 600 hectares of mangrove swamps existed. Fishing is by capture (36 percent) and aquaculture (64 percent). The total catch in 2002 was 7,796 tons of fish and shellfish.

Mining and Minerals: None other than minor amounts of stone quarrying.

Industry and Manufacturing: Manufacturing produced 28 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2004. Singapore's primary industries are electronics, chemicals, oil drilling equipment, petroleum refining, rubber processing and rubber products, processed food and beverages, ship repair, and offshore platform construction. The national industrial production growth rate for 2003 was 2.8 percent.

Energy: In 2001 Singapore produced nearly 30.5 billion and consumed nearly 28.4 billion kilowatt-hours of energy. The country was 100 percent self-sufficient in its electric energy needs. Singapore produced no oil or natural gas but consumed an estimated 700,000 barrels per day and 2.5 billion cubic meters, respectively, in 2001.

Services: Services produced 67.8 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2003 and occupied 49 percent of the labor force in 2004. Major services include financial services, life sciences, and entrepôt trade.

Banking and Finance: Singapore's banking and investment sector is regulated by the Monetary Authority of Singapore. In March 2005, Singapore had 111 commercial banks, including 106 foreign-owned banks and 49 merchant banks. Singapore has two stock exchanges, Singapore Exchange Derivatives Trading Limited (SGX-DT) and Singapore Securities Trading Limited (SGX-ST). The Monetary Authority of Singapore also regulated some 145 insurance companies.

Tourism: In 2004 Singapore had some 8.3 million visitor arrivals, not counting Malaysians who arrived by land across the Johore Strait. Most visitors to Singapore come from Indonesia (22 percent), China (9 percent), Malaysia (7 percent; not including those arriving by land), and Japan (7 percent).

Labor: Singapore's labor force totaled nearly 2.2 million, or 64 percent of the population, in 2004. Of this total, 49 percent were in business, financial, and other services; 18 percent were in manufacturing; 11 percent were in transportation and communications; 6 percent were in construction; and 16 percent were in other occupations. According to the Ministry of Manpower, the annual average unemployment rate for 2004 was at 4.5 percent.

Foreign Economic Relations: As a major world trading center, Singapore has many trading partners and fosters stable trade relations worldwide.

Imports: Singapore's imports totaled around US\$169.2 billion in 2004. Machinery and equipment, mineral fuels, chemicals, and foodstuffs are Singapore's major import commodities. The major import partners are Malaysia (15.2 percent), the European Union (12.8 percent), the United States (12.5 percent), Japan (11.7 percent), China (9.9 percent), Taiwan (5.7 percent), South Korea (4.3 percent), and Thailand (4.1 percent).

Exports: Singapore's exports totaled US\$185 billion in 2004. The major exports are machinery and equipment (especially electronic components and parts), consumer goods, chemicals, and mineral fuels and petroleum products (which are processed for reexport). The major export partners in 2004 were Malaysia (15.2 percent), European Union (13.8 percent), United States (12.4 percent), Hong Kong (9.8 percent), China (8.6 percent), Japan (6.4 percent), Taiwan (4.6 percent), Thailand (4.3 percent), and South Korea (4.1 percent).

Trade Balance: Singapore maintains a favorable balance of trade. Its 2004 imports totaled an estimated US\$169.2 billion, and exports totaled an estimated US\$185 billion free on board.

Balance of Payments: Singapore's current account balance was US\$26.2 billion for 2003.

External Debt: The estimated external debt in 2003 was US\$15 billion.

Foreign Investment: Foreign investment (90 percent of all investment commitments) in Singapore totaled US\$3.6 billion in 2004. Most investment is in electronic and chemical manufacturing industries and comes primarily from the United States (around 40 percent), Japan (around 30 percent), and European Union nations (about 20 percent).

Currency and Exchange Rate: Singapore's currency is the Singapore dollar (S\$). The interbank exchange rate on May 1, 2005, was US\$1 = S\$1.63820. The Singapore dollar is made up of 100 cents. Coins are minted in denominations of S\$0.05, S\$0.10, S\$0.20, S\$0.50, and S\$1. S\$0.01 coins are in circulation but are no longer minted. Banknotes are issued in denominations of S\$2, S\$5, S\$10, S\$50, S\$100, S\$1,000, and S\$10,000.

Fiscal Year: April 1 to March 31, which the government refers to as the financial year.

TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Overview: Singapore has a sophisticated urban transit network of light rail, metro rail, and buses to move commuters throughout the urbanized nation. As the home of one of the world's busiest ports, Singapore provides free-trade zones and shipping services at a strategic juncture of shipping lanes and water, air, and land trade routes.

Roads: Singapore has 2,882 kilometers of roads. Of this total, 150 kilometers are expressways. A causeway links the Singapore road system with that of Malaysia across the Johore Strait. The Ministry of Transport reported that at the end of 2003, Singapore had some 400,000 private automobiles, some 13,000 buses, and more than 160,000 commercial and other vehicles plus 135,000 motorcycles and scooters.

Railroads: Singapore has only 23 kilometers of railroad track, all of it operated by Malaysian Railways and located technically on Malaysian territory per an agreement brokered in 1965. The line provides passenger service three times daily from Singapore's Keppel Station, across a 1.2-kilometer causeway over the Johore Strait, to the Malaysian mainland and Kuala Lumpur. Weekly luxury train service also is available from Keppel Station to Chang Mai and Bangkok, Thailand, with connections to Kuala Lumpur.

Rapid Transit: Singapore's principal public mass transit system is operated by SMRT Corporation, which also runs light rail, bus, and taxi services. In fiscal year (FY) 2004, SMRT trains conveyed 391.5 million passengers on the system's 89.4 kilometers of above- and underground track. The system has 16 underground stations, 34 elevated stations, and 1 station at grade and operates on two lines, the North-South and East-West lines. The Bukit Panjang Light Rail Transit system is a fully automated service that carried 13.7 million passengers in FY 2004, using some 7.8 kilometers of elevated guideways and serving 14 stations. More than 1 billion passengers rode on SMRT and SBS Transit buses in FY 2004. SBS Transit, which started as a bus company (Singapore Bus Services) in 1973, began light rail and its Mass Rapid Transit operations in 2003. By 2005 SBS was operating two mini-metro light-rail feeder lines and one full metro line—the North East Line—with 14 operational underground stations and 20 kilometers of track. SBS and SMRT metro lines intersect at key interchange points.

Ports: The Port of Singapore, with a deep harbor and a strategic location, is one the busiest in the world, with more than 133,000 ships of more than 75 gross registered tons (GRT) arriving in 2004. According to recorded container traffic data, Singapore is the world's second busiest port. In the same year, the port handled 393.4 million tons of seaborne cargo and handled and

performed a wide range of ship and maritime services. The port has three major anchorages—the Eastern, Western, and Johore sectors—which offer specialized locations for various types of cargo and ships of various sizes and purposes, including foreign warships. There are five port terminals, each specializing in different types of cargo, and some 15 kilometers of wharves. The port has seven free-trade zones, six for seaborne trade and one for air cargo. Goods are stored in the free-trade zones for processing and reexportation with minimum customs formalities. Singapore also offers extensive technology-driven warehouse and oil storage facilities. More than 3,000 ships are registered in Singapore, which itself has the fifteenth largest merchant fleet in the world, with 900 ships of 1,000 GRT or more for a total of 23.1 million GRT. The major ships include 136 bulk carriers, 84 cargo ships, 96 chemical tankers, 4 combination bulk carriers, 8 combination ore and oil carriers, 186 container ships, 41 liquefied natural gas carriers, 10 specialized tankers, 3 livestock carriers, 2 multifunctional large-load carriers, 5 roll-on/roll-off carriers, 1 short-sea passenger ship, and 32 vehicle carriers.

Inland and Coastal Waterways: Singapore has no significant inland waterways. Its waterways on the Strait of Malacca coast are heavily trafficked by maritime ships.

Civil Aviation and Airports: Singapore has 10 airports, mostly for military use, two of which have paved runways of more than 3,047 meters. The main international airport is Singapore Changi Airport, with both major passenger and air cargo facilities, located on the northeast side of Singapore, about 20 kilometers from the city center. Seletar Airport, 13 kilometers from downtown Singapore, also handles some commercial traffic. Singapore's main airline is Singapore Airlines (SIA), a scheduled international carrier serving 90 destinations in 37 countries throughout the world. SIA provides both passenger and cargo service, using 117 relatively new Airbus and Boeing aircraft. Originally 100 percent state-owned, the government's stockholding in SIA has decreased to 56 percent. Silkair, with a fleet of 11 Airbus aircraft, provides service to numerous Southeast Asian cities plus selected destinations in China and India. Two other Singapore private airlines, Tiger Airways and ValuAir, provide close-by regional service. Singapore handled some 1.7 million tons of air cargo in 2004.

Pipelines: Singapore had 139 kilometers of natural gas pipelines in Singapore in 2004.

Telecommunications: Telecommunication policy, regulations, and promotion are the responsibility of a government agency, Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore. Postal and telecommunication services are provided by Singapore Telecommunications (SingTel), which is 68 percent owned by Temasek Holdings (Private), a government holding company, and 32 percent privately owned. Seventeen FM stations and 2 shortwave stations broadcast to some 2.6 million radios as of 2003. Seven television broadcast stations also were in operation in 2003, providing service to more than 1.3 million televisions. Singapore had 1.8 million telephones and 3.5 million cellular phones (and some 911 subscribers per 1,000 population) in use in 2004. The highly touted telephone system uses submarine cables to Malaysia (both Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah), Indonesia, and the Philippines, as well as two earth satellite stations using Intelsat satellites (one each) positioned over the Indian and Pacific oceans. Singapore had 2.3 million Internet users in 2002 and some 492 Internet subscribers per 1,000 population in 2004.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Government Overview: Singapore is a parliamentary republic. The constitution, based on that promulgated on June 3, 1959, for the State of Singapore, was amended in 1965 at independence. The presidency is largely ceremonial, and the prime minister is the most powerful political figure. The current prime minister, Lee Hsien Loong, however, has been in office only since August 12, 2004, and serves under the advice of his father, long-time prime minister and now minister mentor, Lee Kuan Yew. The senior minister, Goh Chok Tong, is the former prime minister, who succeeded Lee Kuan Yew in 1990. The People's Action Party (PAP), which was founded in 1954, has held power without serious opposition since 1959.

Constitution: The constitution of the Republic of Singapore was promulgated in 1965 and has undergone two major revisions, in 1985 and 1999. It has 14 parts and 153 articles and is based on English common law. It provides all the mechanics for a liberal democracy, but one-party rule for more than 45 years has not given the opposition a meaningful chance to develop.

Executive Branch: The president is Sellapan Rama—S.R.—Nathan, who ran unopposed and was elected to a six-year term by direct popular vote on August 18, 1999. He was sworn in on September 1, 1999. The largely ceremonial president is the head of state. The president is assisted by the Council of Presidential Advisers (CPA), a body established by constitutional amendment in 1991. The president is required to consult the CPA before he vetoes the government budget or appointments of government nominees to key posts. In other matters, such as withholding assent to certain bills passed by parliament, appointments to statutory boards, and withholding concurrence in regard to detention on persons in times of national emergency, it is up to the president's discretion whether or not he consults with the CPA. The CPA has six members, including two appointed by the president at his discretion, two nominated by the prime minister, one nominated by the chief justice of the Supreme Court, and one nominated by the chairman of the Public Service Commission. CPA members are appointed to initial six-year terms and can be reappointed for additional four-year terms. The current chairman of the CPA is Sim Kee Boon.

The head of government is the prime minister, Lee Hsien Loong, who has held office since August 12, 2004, and concurrently serves as minister of finance. The prime minister is assisted by a senior minister (Chok Tong, since August 12, 2004, the former prime minister), a minister mentor (Lee Kuan Yew, since August 12, 2004, the prime minister's father), two deputy prime ministers, and 14 other ministers. The president appoints as prime minister a member of Parliament who, in the view of the president, is likely to command the confidence of the majority of the members of Parliament. There is no set tenure for the office of prime minister. On the advice of the prime minister, the president appoints the other members of the cabinet. The cabinet is responsible for government policies and day-to-day administration of the affairs of state. It is responsible collectively to the Parliament.

Legislative Branch: The unicameral 84-seat Singapore Parliament is modeled after the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy where members are voted in at regular general elections. The leader of the political party that secures the majority of seats in Parliament is asked by the president to become the prime minister. The prime minister then selects ministers

from elected members of Parliament to form the cabinet, which runs the executive wing of government. When the new Parliament meets for the first time, a speaker is elected. Each Parliament lasts for five years from the date of its first sitting after a general election. General elections are held within three months of the dissolution of Parliament. Members are elected by popular, universal suffrage. There can also be up to nine “nominated members” appointed by the president from among nominees who have rendered distinguished public service, brought honor to the republic, or distinguished themselves in the fields of arts and letters, culture, the sciences, business, industry, the professions, social or community service, or the labor movement. Parliament also can have up to six “nonconstituency members” representing a political party or several parties not forming the government. Nominated and non-constituency members are prohibited from voting on amendments to the constitution, money and supply bills, no-confidence measures, and removal of the president from office. The constitution also provides for group representation in Parliament of the Malay, Indian, and minority communities.

Judicial Branch: The judicial branch is headed by a Supreme Court with a chief justice appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister. The other Supreme Court judges are appointed by the president on the advice of the chief justice. The Supreme Court consists of the Court of Appeals and the High Court. Supreme Court judges or former Supreme Court judges can sit as judges on the Court of Appeals and the High Court. The Court of Appeals and High Court judges are appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister. Judges normally serve until age 65. Subordinate courts include criminal courts, criminal mentions courts (at which charges are first placed), traffic court, night court, coroners’ court, civil courts, family court, and various other tribunals and services that support the subordinate court system. The Syariah Court was established in 1955 and adjudicates Muslim marriages, divorces, property dispositions, and other matters relating to Muslim inheritance, betrothal, marriage, and divorce.

Administrative Divisions: Singapore is a unitary state with no second-order administrative divisions.

Provincial and Local Government: Singapore has no provincial or local government. There are some advisory bodies based on the 23 electoral divisions.

Judicial and Legal System: The legal system is based on English common law. According to Article 2 of the constitution, the laws of Singapore include written laws and any legislation of the United Kingdom or other enactments or instruments in operation in Singapore. Common law and any custom or usage having the force of law in Singapore also are in effect according to Article 2.

Electoral System: Suffrage begins at 21 years of age and is universal and compulsory. Singapore has 23 electoral divisions or constituencies. There are 9 single-member constituencies and 14 group representation constituencies, each with between three and six individuals, representing 75 members of Parliament. Singapore has only two kinds of elections, presidential and parliamentary. The president is elected by popular vote for a six-year term. The next presidential election is in August 2005. The current president, Sellapan Rama Nathan, was nominated unopposed on August 18, 1999, and succeeded to the presidency without polling. The leader of the majority party in parliament, or, although it has never happened, the leader of a

majority coalition, is normally appointed prime minister by the president. The People's Action Party (PAP) swept the most recent parliamentary elections, held on November 3, 2001, as it has every election since 1959. The PAP, headed by Lee Hsien Loong, won 75.3 percent of the contested constituencies and 82 of the 84 seats in Parliament. The other two seats were won by the Workers' Party of Singapore, a social democratic party led by Sylvia Lim Swee Lian, and the Singapore People's Party, a liberal party led by Chiam See Tong. The next legislative elections will be held no later than June 25, 2007.

Politics and Political Parties: The majority party, which has been in power since 1959, is the People's Action Party (PAP). Of the opposition parties, only the Workers' Party of Singapore and the Singapore People's Party (SPP), which represents the Singapore Democratic Alliance, hold seats in Parliament. Other parties, none of which hold seats in parliament, include the Democratic Progressive Party, National Solidarity Party (NSP), Singapore Democratic Party, Singapore Justice Party (SJP), and Singapore National Malay Organization (Pertuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Singapura—PKMS). The Singapore Democratic Alliance includes the NSP, PKMS, SJP, and SPP and is led by Chiam See Tong.

Mass Media: All newspapers in Singapore are required by law to be public companies and are regulated by the government. The media industry is regulated by the government's Media Development Authority. Major daily newspapers are published in various languages. English-language publications include the venerable *Straits Times*, founded in 1845; *Business Times*; and three tabloids, *The New Paper*, *Streets*, and *Today*. Chinese-language newspapers include *Lianhe Wanbao*, *Lianhe Zaobao*, *Shin Min Daily News*, and *Toh Lam Hhat*. Two other dailies are the Malay *Berita Harian* and Tamil *Tamil Murasu*. Weekly newspapers are offered in English and Malay. Most newspapers offer Internet access. There also is a lively magazine circulation with 17 domestic English, 1 Malay, and 9 Chinese titles. Most broadcasting is produced by radio and television companies owned by the Media Corporation of Singapore and Radio Corporation of Singapore. Other radio stations include Radio Heart, Rediffusion, and SAFRA Radio. Cable, satellite, and traditional television broadcasters include CNBC Asian Business News, Singapore CableVision, Singapore Television 12; SPH MediaWorks, and Television Corporation of Singapore. Broadcasts are in Chinese, English, Malay, and Tamil, but primarily in Chinese and English.

Foreign Relations: Singapore maintains diplomatic relations with 165 nations. Overseas, it has 7 high commissions, 17 embassies, 2 permanent representations to the United Nations (UN), and 14 consulates general and consulates. Twenty nonresident high commissioners and ambassadors are based in Singapore. Additionally, Singapore has 24 honorary consuls general and consuls. Singapore hosts embassies or high commissions of 55 nations, 37 foreign consular posts, and offices of eight international organizations. In addition, more than 60 nonresident foreign ambassadors are accredited to Singapore. Singapore seeks to maintain a credible and deterrent military defense to underpin its foreign policy. It promotes good relations with its neighbors and any nation wishing to establish friendly relations. As a founding member of the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN), Singapore is committed to maintaining a secure and peaceful environment in and around Southeast Asia and in the Asia Pacific region. After breaking off a long-term diplomatic relationship with the Republic of China on Taiwan, in 1990, Singapore established relations with the People's Republic of China in 1990. Since then the two sides have

traded visits from numerous high-level delegations and have developed a wide range of political, economic, cultural, and scientific and technical exchanges. Tensions over Singapore's relations with Taiwan—emanating both from Beijing and Taipei—continue. Continued good relations with the United States are based on bilateral free trade and close military ties.

Membership in International Organizations: Singapore is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Nonaligned Movement, the United Nations (UN), and numerous other international organizations, including: the Asian Development Bank, Asia Pacific Economic Forum, Bank for International Settlements, Colombo Plan, Commonwealth, Forum on Small States, Group of 77, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Aviation Organization, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Chamber of Commerce, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, International Criminal Police Organization, International Development Association, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Finance Corporation, International Hydrographic Organization, International Labour Organization, International Maritime Organization, International Monetary Fund, International Olympic Committee, International Organization for Standardization, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, International Telecommunication Union, Multilateral Investment Geographic Agency, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Permanent Court of Arbitration, UN Conference on Trade and Development, Universal Postal Union, World Confederation of Labor, World Customs Organization, World Health Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, World Meteorological Organization, and World Trade Organization.

Major International Treaties: Singapore is a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty; Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons; and Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Singapore also is party to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, Montreal Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, UN Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal. It also is a party to the Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, and Ship Pollution agreements.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Armed Forces Overview: The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) had 72,500 personnel on active duty in 2004, of whom 35,000 were conscripts. The service components are the army, 50,000; navy, 9,000, with 1,800 conscripts; and air force, 13,500, with 3,000 conscripts. There are an estimated 312,500 personnel in reserve status (army, about 300,000; navy, about 5,000; and air force, about 7,500). The SAF is led by a chief (a major general) supported by army, navy, and air force chiefs of staff. As of 2005, the Ministry of Defence was headed by Teo Chee Hean, who also oversees the administration of the Defence Policy Group, Defence Administration Group, Singapore Armed Forces, and Defence Science and Technology Agency.

Foreign Military Relations: The British Far East Command and the British naval presence in Singapore formally ended in 1971. At that time, Singapore became a participant in the Five-Power Defence Arrangement with Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and a joint military force was in place until 1975. Singapore continues to provide facilities for servicing foreign naval vessels, but its official policy disallows the establishment of a naval base on the island by another country. Under the five-power arrangement, joint military and naval maneuvers are held annually. Singapore supports a strong U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region. In 1990 the United States and Singapore signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that allows U.S. access to Singapore facilities at the Paya Lebar Airbase and the Sembawang wharves. In accordance with the MOU, the U.S. Navy established a logistics unit in Singapore in 1992. Furthermore, U.S. fighter aircraft are deployed periodically to Singapore for exercises, and U.S. Navy vessels visit Singapore. The MOU was amended in 1999 to permit U.S. naval vessels to berth at the Changi Naval Base, which was completed in 2001. In October 2003, Singapore and the United States announced their intention to expand cooperation in defense and security, and to negotiate a Framework Agreement for a Strategic Cooperation Partnership. Areas of cooperation also include counterterrorism, counterproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, joint military exercises and training, policy dialogue, and technology exchange. Singapore has conducted joint naval exercises with the United States and has joined the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative. Joint naval and air force exercises are held annually with Australia. Singapore maintains relationships with the armed forces of Australia, Brunei, France, Thailand, and the United States, primarily for the purpose of training. Although it does not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Singapore maintains training facilities there. Most of Singapore's major military imports since 1998 have been from the United States. It also has acquired submarines from Sweden and has a frigate on order from France.

External Threat: Singapore is faced with no major external threat but does feel threatened by international terrorist groups.

Defense Budget: Military expenditures in 2003 were estimated at US\$4.7 billion, or about US\$1,116 per capita, representing about 5.2 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The government budget for 2004 included a figure of US\$5.4 billion (46.8 percent of the total budget) for "security and external relations." *The Military Balance* reports that in 2004 the defense budget totaled US\$5.0 billion.

Major Military Units: The army has three combined arms divisions, a rapid deployment division, and a mechanized division. Included in these organizations are nine infantry brigades with both active-duty and reserve personnel. The navy has a fleet with two flotillas and a submarine squadron, and coastal, naval logistics, and training commands. The air force is organized into 20 combat, reconnaissance, transportation, support, and helicopter squadrons. It also has one squadron of unmanned aerial vehicles and an air defense division, with four field defense squadrons.

Major Military Equipment: The army has an estimated 350 light tanks, 80 to 100 main battle tanks, 22 reconnaissance vehicles, 272 armored infantry fighting vehicles, more than 750 armored personnel carriers, 206 towed artillery pieces, an estimated 18 self-propelled artillery pieces, a variety of mortars, more than 30 antitank guided weapons, rocket launchers, recoilless

launchers, 30 air-defense guns (some of which are self-propelled), and 75 or more surface-to-air missiles. The navy has two submarines with antisubmarine warfare capability, 6 corvettes, 6 fast missile attack craft, 12 offshore patrol vessels, 4 mine countermeasures ships, 5 amphibious ships, 136 landing craft, a diving support and salvage ship, and a submarine support ship. The air force has 126 combat aircraft, 28 armed helicopters, 8 reconnaissance aircraft, 4 airborne early warning aircraft, 4 tankers, 19 transports, 59 unarmed helicopters, and 64 unmanned aerial vehicles. The air force's air defense division has air-defense guns, antiaircraft and antiship missiles, and mobile radar equipment.

Military Service: Singapore has compulsory military service for males reaching the age of 18 and voluntary service for those reaching 16 years of age. The conscription term of service is 24 months. Reservists attend annual training up to age 40 for the army and age 50 for the navy and air force.

Paramilitary Forces: Singapore's paramilitary forces include the Singapore Police Force and the Civil Defence Force (CDF). The CDF comprises 84,300 personnel, including 1,600 regulars, 3,200 conscripts, 23,000 reservists, and more than 54,000 volunteers. It also has a construction brigade with 2,500 conscripts.

Foreign Military Forces: In 2004 the United States had 89 liaison personnel assigned to Singapore (39 air force and 50 navy). New Zealand had an 11-person liaison support unit stationed in Singapore.

Military Forces Abroad: Since 1991, Singapore has taken part in 11 peacekeeping missions in various capacities, including the provision of medical support, provision of military advisers for national reconciliation, and supervision of United Nations (UN)-sponsored elections in Namibia, Guatemala, Cambodia, South Africa, and Afghanistan. Singaporeans also have held senior appointments in UN peacekeeping operations such as deputy force commander and chief of staff of the UN Iraq/Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) and deputy chief of staff for civil-military affairs of the UN Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET). In 1993, at the request of the UN secretary general, Singapore provided a special envoy to head a mission to broker a peaceful settlement between Russia and the Baltic States. In 1997 Singapore became only the seventh country to sign the memorandum of understanding on UN Standby Arrangements. Under its commitments, Singapore provides planning officers, military observers, medical personnel, and police officers on standby for the support of UN peacekeeping missions. In July 2002, a Singapore Armed Forces major general was appointed as the force commander of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNMISET). In 2005 Singapore military and police personnel were serving in UN peacekeeping missions in Iraq and Kuwait (UNIKOM), Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE), and East Timor (UNMISET), and also in New York at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) provided medical and other humanitarian aid to Indonesia following the earthquake and tsunami in December 2004 and the earthquake in March 2005.

Additionally, in 2004 Singapore had some 230 SAF personnel in flight training in Australia, 500 in helicopter training in Brunei, and 200 in flight training in France. The SAF maintains a joint artillery and combat engineer training camp in Thailand and has a flight training detachment in

the United States. The SAF also has three training camps (for infantry, artillery, and armored forces) in Taiwan. In 2002–4 there was discussion by Singapore about possibly moving some or all of these facilities to China's Hainan Island.

Police and Internal Security: The Singapore Police Force has an estimated strength of 12,000, including 3,500 conscripts. There also are 21,000 reserve police officers. The Singapore Police Force includes the Police Coast Guard, which has inshore patrol craft and about 60 other boats.

Terrorism: Singapore perceives a threat from international terrorist organizations. As a consequence, the Five-Power Defence Arrangement, to which Singapore belongs along with Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, was expanded after 2001 to include counterterrorism. The Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiah (Community of Islam), an affiliate of al Qaeda, has operational units in peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, and Papua New Guinea. Singapore maintains a high level of readiness and cooperation in the area of counterterrorism, especially in the wake of terrorist bombings in neighboring Indonesia, in Bali in 2002 and Jakarta in 2003. Particular emphasis has been placed on protective and preventive actions taken against attacks on critical infrastructure, cyberterrorism, and chemical and biological attacks. Maritime piracy, long a problem in the immediate area, is of special concern to Singapore. The threat of a terrorist ship hijacking, possibly with the placement of conventional or nuclear explosives onboard, has led Singapore to increase maritime security on its own and with its neighbors.

Human Rights: The Ministry of Home Affairs's Internal Security Department enforces the Internal Security Act as a counter to potential espionage, international terrorism, threats to racial and religious harmony, and subversion. According to the U.S. Department of State's 2004 *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*, the government maintains effective control over all security activities, and there have been no reports of human rights abuses by security forces. The government generally respects the human rights of its citizens. However, the government has broad powers to limit citizen rights and to handicap the political opposition. Caning, in addition to imprisonment, has been a routine punishment for numerous offenses. Preventive detention has been used to deal with espionage, terrorism, organized crime, and narcotics. Citizens' privacy rights occasionally have been infringed, and the government has restricted freedom of speech and freedom of the press and has limited other civil and political rights. Government pressure to conform has resulted in the practice of self-censorship by journalists.

The government has used court proceedings and defamation suits against political opponents and critics. Such suits have consistently been decided in favor of the government, a phenomenon that inhibits political speech and action and leads observers to believe that the ruling party uses the judicial system for political purposes. Some restrictions on public events were relaxed in 2004, and there was a moderate level of debate in the media on various public issues. However, the government has continued to prohibit discussion of sensitive ethnic or religious issues and has restricted freedom of assembly and freedom of association, and some religious groups, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Unification Church, have been banned.